

# LAMENTATIONS

LAMENT OVER THE LOSS



# OVERVIEW

- \* The original name of the book in Hebrew, ekah, can be translated “Alas!”
- \* Later translators substituted it with the title “Lamentations”
- \* While the author of Lamentations remains nameless within the book, strong evidence from the text points to the prophet Jeremiah as the author.
- \* Not only does the author of the book witness the results of the recent destruction of Jerusalem, he seems to have witnessed the invasion itself ([Lamentations 1:13-15](#)).
- \* Jeremiah was present for both events.
  
- \* **Chapters: 5**
- \* **Verses: 154**



# OVERVIEW

- \* Judah continued in unrepentant idolatry
- \* God allowed the Babylonians to besiege, plunder, burn, and destroy the city of Jerusalem.
- \* Solomon's Temple, which had stood for approximately 400 years, was burned to the ground.
- \* The book of Lamentations expresses the humiliation, suffering, and despair of Jerusalem and her people following the destruction of the city by the Babylonians in 587 BC
- \* While Job dealt with unexplained evil, Jeremiah lamented a tragedy entirely of Jerusalem's making.
- \* The people of this once great city experienced the judgment of the holy God, and the results were devastating.
- \* Children begged food from their mothers ([Lamentations 2:12](#)),
- \* young men and women were cut down by swords ([2:21](#)),
- \* formerly compassionate mothers used their children for food ([4:10](#)).
- \* Even the city's roads mourned over its condition ([1:4](#))



# THE POETIC STRUCTURE

- \* Lamentations was more likely written for public rituals commemorating the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its Temple.
- \* This special book is a collection of five lament poems recounting the tragic fall of Jerusalem to Babylon.
- \* The 1st, 2nd, and 4th chapters are 22 verses long
- \* When lined up, the 1st letters of the verse form the 22 Hebrew alphabets.
- \* Here's an example:





# THE POETIC STRUCTURE

- \* Chapter 5's verses reflect the Hebrew alphabet in number alone.
- \* There are 22 verses, but they aren't arranged into an acrostic.
- \* The 3rd chapter is even more impressive:
  - \* It's 66 verses long,
  - \* It works through the alphabet 3 verses at a time.
  - \* Verses 1-3 begin with *alep*, verses 4-6 begin with *bet*, etc.
  - \* Here's what it looks like in Hebrew:

3 אֲנִי הַגִּבֹּר רֹאֶה עֲנִי בְּשֹׁבֶט עֲבֹרָתוֹ:  
2 אוֹתִי נִהַג וַיִּלֶּךְ חֲשָׁד וְלֹא-אוֹר:  
3 אֲדָּ בִי יֹשֵׁב יִהְיֶה יָדוֹ כָּל-הַיּוֹם: ס  
4 בָּלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי שֶׁבֶר עֲצָמוֹתַי:  
5 בָּנָה עָלַי וַיִּקַּף רֹאשׁ וּתְלָאָה:  
6 בְּמַחֲשָׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי כְּמִתִּי עוֹלָם: ס



# LAMENTATIONS VS. DEUTERONOMY

LAMENTATIONS		DEUTERONOMY	
<b>1:3</b>	She dwells among the nations but she has found no rest.	<b>28:65</b>	And among those nations you shall find no rest.
<b>1:5a</b>	Her adversaries have become the head	<b>28:44</b>	He shall be the head, you shall be the tail
<b>1:5c</b>	Her little ones have gone away as captives before the adversary.	<b>28:32</b>	Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people.
<b>1:6c</b>	They have fled without strength before the pursuer.	<b>28:25</b>	You shall flee seven way before them
<b>1:18c</b>	My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity	<b>28:41</b>	You shall have sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours, for they shall go into captivity
<b>2:15</b>	All who pass along the way clap their hands in derision at you	<b>28:37</b>	You shall become a horror, a proverb, a taunt among all the people where the Lord will drive you.
<b>2:20</b>	Should women eat their offspring?	<b>28:53-57</b>	Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body ....



LAMENTATIONS		DEUTERONOMY	
<b>2:21</b>	On the ground in the streets lie young and old	<b>28:50</b>	...who shall have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young
<b>4:10</b>	The hands of compassionate women boiled their own children	<b>28:56-57</b>	...the refined and delicate women among you ... she shall eat them secretly (i.e., her children) for lack of anything else ....
<b>5:2b</b>	Our houses were given to aliens	<b>28:30</b>	You shall build a house, but you shall not live in it.
<b>5:5</b>	There is no rest for us.	<b>28:65</b>	And among those nations you shall find no rest
<b>5:10</b>	... the burning heat of famine ....	<b>28:24</b>	... the rain of your land powder and dust ....
<b>5:11</b>	Women of Zion ravished.	<b>28:30</b>	Who shall have no respect for the old ....
<b>5:12</b>	Elders were not respected	<b>28:50</b>	Who shall have no respect for the old ....
<b>5:18</b>	foxes prowl in Zion	<b>28:26</b>	And your carcasses shall be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.



# HOPE IN THE MIDST OF CALAMITY

- \* The city was destroyed and the people were exiled because of their sin, but even this is an opportunity to call on God for help.
- \* But the Book of Lamentations tells us that the God of vengeance is still a God of hope.
- \* In the middle of the book, the writer reminds the people to hope in God:

## **Lamentations 3:22-26**

22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

24 I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

25 The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

## **Lamentations 3:39-40**

39 Why should the living complain when punished for their sins?

40 Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.



# OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

## **I. The Desolation of Jerusalem, 1:1-22**

A. The Barrenness of the City, 1:1-11

B. The Anguish of the City, 1:12-22

## **II. The Destruction of Jerusalem, 2:1-22**

A. The Lord's Judgment, 2:1-10

B. The Author's Lament, 2:11-22

## **III. The Distraught Prophet, 3:1-66**

A. His Lament, 3:1-18

B. His Hope, 3:19-42

C. His Suffering, 3:43-54

D. His Prayer, 3:55-66

## **IV. The Defeated People of Jerusalem, 4:1-22**

A. The Siege of the City, 4:1-12

B. The Reasons for the Siege, 4:13-20

C. The Hope for the Future, 4:21-22

## **V. The Prayer for the People, 5:1-22**

A. Confession, 5:1-18

B. Petition, 5:19-22